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JEWISH-ARABIC STUDIES

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America

I. SHI'ITIC ELEMENTS IN JEWISH SECTARIANISM.*

I. THE RAJ'A DOCTRINE

IN discussing the rôle of the Messianic element in Islam, we have already had occasion to refer to the doc-

*Continued from New Series, vol. I, 183 ff. The works regularly or frequently referred to in this article are quoted under the following abbreviations: *Shi'itic Elements* = the first part of this article in *JQR.*, New Series, vol. I, 183, ff.—*Shi'ites I* and *II* = my treatise *The Heterodoxies of the Shi'ites according to Ibn Hāzīm*, New Haven 1909, reprint from the Journal of the American Oriental Society, voll. XXVIII and XXIX.—*AbS I* and *II* = my article "ʿAbdallāh b. Sabā, der Begründer der Šiʿa, und sein jüdischer Ursprung" in Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, voll. XXIII and XXIV (1909-1910).—*Browne, Persia* = Edward G. Browne, a Literary History of Persia, vol. I, New York 1902.—*Browne, Tarikh* = B., The Taʾrīkh-i-jadīd, or New History of Mirzā Ḥuseyn of Hamadān. Cambridge 1893.—*Darmesteter* = D., *Le Mahdī*, Paris 1885.—*Goldziher, Religion des Islams in Orientalische Religionen*, Berlin and Leipzig 1906 (*Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, Teil I, Abteilung III, 1).—*Goldziher, Vorlesungen* = G., *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Heidelberg 1910.—*Grätz* = G., *Geschichte der Juden*, third edition; vol. V, fourth edition.—*van Vloten* = v. V., *Recherches sur la domination arabe, le chiisme et les croyances messianiques sous le khalifat des Omayyades*, Amsterdam 1894.—*ARABIC AUTHORS*: *Bagdādī* = B., *Kitāb al-farq beinaʾl-firaq* (see *Shi'ites*, I, 26), edited by Muḥammad Badr, Cairo 1910.—*Birūnī* = B., *Al-ātār al-bāḡiya*, ed. Sachau; Sachau's translation, London 1879.—*Ibn Hāzīm* = I. H., *Milāl waʾn-nihāl*, Cairo 1317-1321.—*Qirḡ.* = Qırkışanl, *Kitāb al-anwār*, ed. Harkavy, in *Zapiski*, St. Petersburg 1895.—*Shahr.* = Shahrastānī, ed. Cureton.—*Tabarī* = T., *Annales*, ed. de Goeje.—*PERIODICALS* and *DICTIONARIES* are quoted under the current abbreviations: *JQR.*, = Jewish Quarterly Review; *JRAS.*, = Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society; *MGWJ.*, = Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums; *PRE**

trine of *Raj'a* or "Return."¹ I revert to it now in order to point out the traces which this fundamental Shiitic tenet left in the dogmatic fabric of Jewish sectarianism.

Raj'a or "Return" is defined by the Arabic lexicographers as "the returning to the present state of existence after death, *before the Day of Resurrection*."² It is the belief in the returning to life of certain individuals and is sharply distinguished from resurrection which involves the returning to life of mankind in general. Originally the date set for the "return" of these individuals was forty days after their death.³ Gradually the time limit was extended and was vaguely fixed in the vast expanse between the moment of death and the day of resurrection. Without entering into the genesis and long-winded development of this remarkable doctrine,⁴ we may state that it appears very early in connection with various heterodox teachings clustering around the person of Christ. The *Raj'a* belief is, above all, closely connected with the ancient and widespread doctrine of Docetism⁵ which taught that the sufferings and death of Jesus did not take place in reality but were a mere ophthalmic delusion. Accordingly, Jesus'

= Protestantische Realencyklopädie, third edition; *WZKM.*, = Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes; *ZA.*, = Zeitschrift für Assyriologie; *ZDMG.*, = Zeitschrift der deutsch-morgenl. Gesellschaft; *ZfhB.*, = Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie.

¹ *Shiitic Elements*, 195 f.

² *Shiites*, II, 23.

³ *Ib.*, 23, 27; 24, 9. 17.—The remarkable tenacity of this belief which is attested in the beginnings of Islam may be seen from the fact that in our own days the Mohammedans are inclined to ascribe to it the remarkable heroism of the Persian Babis (about whom see later in the course of this article), "since the latter are convinced that after forty days they would come to life again," F. C. Andreas, *Die Babis in Persien*, Leipzig 1896, 45. See later note 92.

⁴ See on *Raj'a Shiites*, II, 23-26; Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 227 ff.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 507 ff.

death is not to be looked upon as the close of his earthly career but as a mere interruption of it, as a temporary disappearance. His condition after this fictitious martyrdom is not that of death, but a state of concealment, of occultation, or, to use the Arabic term, a mere *jaiba*, an absence.⁶ His appearance on earth to take up his interrupted mission and to carry it to triumph is, in consequence, a *re-appearance*, a "return."

The influence of this set of conceptions, transmitted through the medium of some obscure heterodox Christian sect,⁷ manifests itself already in the beginnings of Islam. The dogma of Docetism, as applied to Jesus, is taught with great emphasis in the Koran⁸ and there is reason to believe that the Raj'a doctrine in its larger application was known to Mohammed and probably constituted the original form of the Messianic hope in Islam.⁹ In orthodox Islam, however, owing partly to political circumstances, partly to the influence of post-biblical Judaism, the Messianic speculations, which were gradually detached from the person of Jesus, assumed more and more an abstract and impersonal character and the Raj'a doctrine was pushed to the background.

The richer was the soil and the ampler the scope which this dogma found in Shiism. For in Shiism, whose very basis is Messianic, the Messianic hopes were not a mere dogmatic abstraction but an intense and immediate reality. They were not connected, as in orthodox Islam, with some ideal mysterious individuals, who in reality were rather types than individuals, but with definite and living person-

⁶ *Shiites*, II, 28; *AbS.*, I, 327.

⁷ *AbS.*, II, 2, n. 2.

⁸ Sura III, 47-50; IV, 155-156. *Comp. AbS.*, II, 2.

⁹ *Shiitic Elements*, 195.

ages of flesh and bone, with 'Alī or his descendants.¹⁰ These 'Alidic Mahdīs or Messiahs, with scarcely an exception, failed of their purpose and they were ruthlessly persecuted and in most cases cruelly murdered by the governing powers. Here the doctrine of Raj'a and Docetism stepped in as the salvation of Shiism. Transferred from Jesus to the Shiitic Messiahs, it made their death ineffectual by denying its reality and saved the Shiites from disappointment and despair by teaching them to wait and to work for the speedy return of their living though hidden Mahdīs. The Raj'a doctrine became of incalculable importance in that it detached the Messianic movements within Shiism which sprang from permanent sources and often involved large and vital issues, from the short-lived 'Alidic figure-heads and rendered the progress of the cause independent of the fate of the fragile Messiahs. The death of the Mahdī which would otherwise have been identical with the death of the movement became a mere incident. Instead of being the close of the Messiah's career, it became a stepping stone to his future glory and an auspicious indication that the Mahdī, having temporarily withdrawn, would soon appear, or re-appear, for his final triumph.

The force of this doctrine is seen very early in the history of Shiism. Its introduction into Islam is ascribed by the Arabic historians and theologians to a certain 'Abdallah b. Sabā who, peculiarly enough, was a Jew of

¹⁰ The same tendency originally prevailed in Judaism, the Messiah being identified with David (Hosea 3, 5; Ezek. 34, 23 f., comp. p. Berakot 2, 4), with Elijah (comp. Friedmann, סדר אליהו רבה, Introduction, 26) or with Hezekiah (see Klausner, *Die Messianischen Vorstellungen des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter der Tannaiten*, Berlin 1904, 69 ff.). A similar tendency is observable in the attempts to assign a definite name to the Messiah; Klausner, *l. c.*, 64 ff.

Southern Arabia.¹¹ If we are right in combining the different and not wholly harmonious reports about this curious Jewish-Mohammedan heresiarch, he originally applied his doctrine to Mohammed whom he apparently believed to be the Messiah and later transferred it in a more elaborate form to 'Alī of whom he preached that his violent death was but a delusion and that he would return from his hiding place to fill the earth with justice.¹²

This belief was subsequently applied to every Shiitic pretender. The cases of its application which extend over the whole history of Islam down to the present day are too numerous to be specified in detail.¹³ The Raj'a belief became the mainstay and the motive power in every Shiitic movement. It also became the *principium divisionis* in the formation of Shiitic factions. For after the death of a Messianic candidate his followers invariably split into two camps, into those who believed in the reality of his death and therefore, having recognized the falsity of his Messianic claim to fill the earth with justice, looked out for another Messiah, and into those who thought that his death was a mere delusion and therefore, expecting his own return in person, appointed but a temporary vicegerent. These two factions which often appear as correlative in the history of Shiism are usually designated as the *Ḳittī'iyya*, "the assertive ones," those who assert the reality of the Messiah's death, and the *Wākīfiyya* "the doubtful ones," those who are doubtful about his death and are inclined to regard it as fictitious.¹⁴

¹¹ *AbS.*, II, 21 ff.

¹² *Ib.*, 14 f.

¹³ *Comp. Shiites*, Index, s. v. "Return."

¹⁴ *Ib.*, II, 50 f.

Before turning to our Jewish evidence to show the general application of this dogma within Jewish sectarianism, it may be advisable to illustrate by one particular detail the curious manner in which some of these Shiitic heterodoxies were reproduced in Judaism.

Once the death of the Messiah or Mahdī is denied in its reality and looked upon as a mere disappearance or concealment, it is natural that religious speculation should be called upon to answer the question as to the *place* in which the Messiah was concealed. Accordingly, the Messiah, during his period of occultation, is placed either in heaven or on earth. The former conception is represented in Islam by the belief, equally attributed to 'Abdallah b. Sabā, that 'Alī was riding in the clouds, whence he would gloriously "return," a belief which was so deep-seated that, as we are told on reliable authority, faithful Shiites would send up their greetings to the clouds in the thought of thereby addressing themselves to 'Alī.¹⁵ More frequently however the Messiah is located in some mysterious spot on earth. Thus the twelfth Imām of the Shi'a, the Messiah of the present day Shiitic High Church is believed to be hidden in a cave flooded with sun-light¹⁶ or in the holy of holies in the mosque of his native town¹⁷ or in the legendary cities of Jābalkā or Jābaršā.¹⁸ The 'Abbasid general Abū Muslim, who after his death was regarded by some of his enthusiastic Persian adherents as

¹⁵ *Ib.*, II, 42 f.; *AbS.*, I, 325, n. 3.; Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 256.

¹⁶ Darmesteter, 48.

¹⁷ *Infra*, p. 496 f.

¹⁸ Browne, *Tarikh*, 287, n. 1; *idem*, *Persia*, 246, n. 1, and in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, II, 300a. Both cities figure prominently in the Alexander legend.

the Messiah, was similarly thought to be concealed in a mysterious Copper Castle.¹⁹

But seclusion and inaccessibility being the primary requirements of a Messianic retreat, it is natural that the hiding place of the Messiah, in preference to any other spot, is located in mountains, more especially in mountain clefts or ridges. This characteristic detail, which has numerous analogies in the folk lore of other nations,²⁰ looms with particular prominence in the legends surrounding the various Shiitic Messiahs. Thus the celebrated Shiitic Mahdi Mohammed Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, a son of 'Alī by a woman of the Ḥanīfa tribe,—hence his designation as "the son of the Ḥanafite woman,"—who was the object of worship of the once powerful Keisaniyya sect²¹ and whose name was the war-cry of a far-reaching and powerful revolutionary movement against the young Caliphate²² was believed to have disappeared and to reside secretly in one of the ridges of the Radwā mountains in the region of Medinah.²³ Innumerable legends hovered around this Messianic retreat and found literary expression in the poems of the great Keisānitic bards of the seventh century

¹⁹ Darmesteter, 43. This castle or, more correctly, citadel of copper (in Persian *ruyin dia*) probably stands for the famous City of Copper (*madīnat annuḥās*, or *madīnat aṣ-ṣufr*, see Yāqūt, s. v.) known from the Alexander legend. Blochet's objection (*Le Messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie Musulmane*, p. 191) is not valid. For Firdausī (quoted by Blochet) was intimately acquainted with the Alexander romance and he may very well refer to the same city. In the company of Abū Muslim are Mazdak and the Mahdī, and all three of them are to appear together, Blochet, l. c., 44.

²⁰ Darmesteter, 32 f.

²¹ On the Keisāniyya see Index to *Shiites*, s. v., particularly II, 33 f.

²² On the uprising of Mukhtār, the agent of Ibn Al-Ḥanafīyya (killed in 687), see Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien im alten Islam*, 74 ff.

²³ *Shiites*, II, 36.

Kuthayyir and as-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī²⁴ In glowing colors do these highly gifted poets picture the Mahdī as dwelling in a glen of the Radwā mountains, surrounded by beasts of prey on which eternal peace has descended, holding intercourse with angels and sustained from overflowing fountains of milk and honey,²⁵ and with genuine religious fervor do they call on him to emerge from his retreat and, preceded by noble steeds and flying banners, return to his believers in order to inaugurate the Messianic age of justice and peace.²⁶ The vitality of this belief may be inferred from the fact that as late as the time of al-Bīrūnī (died 1038), three centuries after Mohammed Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, his "return" was still awaited by numerous Mohammedans.²⁷ Similarly a later Messianic pretender Mohammed b. 'Abdallah, a great-great-grandson of 'Alī, who rose in Medinah against the Caliph Maṣṣūr and was killed by him in 762, was believed by many of his followers to be hidden in Ḥājir, likewise a spot in the Radwā mountains.²⁸ In like fashion the Messianic rebel 'Abdallah b. Mu'āwiya (d. 747), to whom reference has already been made previously,²⁹ was thought after his ephemeral triumph and his execution at the hands of Abū Muslim to have concealed himself in the mountains of Ispahan.³⁰ Abū Muslim

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-39. The fountains of milk and honey from which the Mahdī is miraculously fed do not necessarily go back to biblical conceptions, as was conjectured *Shiites*, II, 39, but rather reflect pseudepigraphic ideas, comp. *AbS.*, II, 37, n. 1. On milk (or cream) and honey in the Babylonian religion see Winckler and Zimmern, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 3rd edition, p. 526.

²⁶ *AbS.*, II, 18.

²⁷ Bīrūnī, 212, 10.

²⁸ *Shiites*, II, 87, 17.

²⁹ *Shiitic Elements*, 205.

³⁰ *Shiites*, II, 44, 16.

himself, having been treacherously murdered by his ungrateful master, the Caliph Maṣṣūr, was believed to have escaped death and to be hidden in the mountains of Rayy,³⁰ where in true Messianic style he was miraculously fed.³¹ It is true, the mountainous character of the Messianic hiding-place is not an inseparable feature of it. Yet, the frequency and the emphasis with which it is pointed out convincingly demonstrates that this particular detail of the Raj'a doctrine was not a fleeting fancy but a deep-seated belief among Shiitic Mohammedans and sufficiently widespread to penetrate eventually beyond the boundaries of Islam.

In the light of these facts we learn to understand the full import of a statement, otherwise unintelligible, relating to the earliest Jewish sectarian of this period, Abū 'Isa al-Iṣfahānī. Abū 'Isa, profiting by a favorable political constellation, rose, in true Mahdistic fashion, against the governing powers to free his people from the yoke of Islam and to usher in the Golden Age. He was killed by the army of the mighty Caliph Maṣṣūr.³² Yet, as the Karaite Kīrkīsānī, without being aware of the bearing of his words, informs us, "*among his adherents there were people who maintained that he had not been killed, but had merely entered a ridge in the mountains, so that nothing further was heard of him.*"³³

If Abū 'Isa had had the fortune of finding a Homer as did his fellow-Messiah Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, we should

³⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 119, 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I, 12 and 38, 13. The expression *ḥayyun yurzaḥu* occurs frequently in connection with Messianic personages.

³² Kīrk., 284, and Shahr., 158. *Shiitic Elements*, 206.

³³ Kīrk., 284, 7: וְקוֹם מִן אֶצְחָאבָה יוֹעֲמֹן אָנָּה לֹם יוֹקָחַל וְאִנְמָא דְכָל מִי כִּרְק. כִּרְק מִן אֶלְגָּבַל וְלֹם יַעֲרָף לֹה כִּבֵּר.

although it must have become evident to every man of intelligence, so that down to this day, they, I mean the Jews of Amadia, still esteem him more highly than many of their prophets, nay, some of them believe him to be the Messiah, the Expected One.⁴⁰ I have seen scores of Persian Jews in Khoi, Silmās, Tabrīz, and Marāḡa who make his name the object of their most solemn oath. In the same province (Amadia) a large number of them profess a religion which they refer to Menahem,⁴¹ the above-mentioned impostor.”

It is clear from the foregoing expositions that the Persian Jews refused to believe in the reality of Alroy's death and continued to wait for his "return." How natural such a belief seemed in that environment may be inferred from the tragicomic sequel which is described by the same writer.⁴² When the rumor of Alroy's death reached Bagdad, two swindlers took advantage of the

⁴⁰ *Ib.*, 1. 15: אֱלִמְטָזָר אֱלִמְנַחֲשָׁר. *Al-muntazar* (the Expected One) which is a standing title of the Shiitic Mahdī, is applied in Jewish literature to the Messiah; comp. Goldziher, *Kitāb ma'ānī al-nafs*, p. 38*. In the same way the title *al-kā'im* (he who rises, the Rising One), which is a constant epithet of the Shiitic Mahdī, is used of the Messiah; Goldziher, *ibid.*, p. 39*. For other examples see *Emek habacha*, translated by Wiener, Appendix, p. כב ult., כג, 1. 4 and my *Selections from the Arabic Writings of Maimonides*, p. 22, 1. 8. In the Arabic original of his *Iggeret Teman* Maimonides introduces his account of the French pseudo-Messiah (see later p. 492 and p. 506 f.) with the words: כִּנָּן קֵד קָאם קַאִים פִּי דִאֲכָל בְּלֹאד אֱלִאֲפֶרְנָג "A *Kā'im* (i. e. Messiah) arose in the interior of France."—אֱלִאֲפֶרְנָג as a combined title of the Messiah is found in a Genizah fragment in Oxford (*Catalogue of Hebrew MSS.* II, No. 2745, 24).

⁴¹ יְנַסְכוּנוֹתָ אֱלִי מְנַחֵם. This might mean that they regarded Menahem as the originator of the religion they professed or that their religion was designated as "Menahemite." Grätz, VI, 247, follows the latter explanation: "nannten sich Menahemisten und schwuren bei seinem Namen."

⁴² Samuel b. 'Abbās, *ibid.*, p. 27 f.

superstitious credulity of their fellow-Jews to cheat them out of their money. They sent in the name of the dead Messiah, who was believed to be alive and temporarily concealed, letters to the Jews of Bagdad in which they proclaimed his speedy return and announced the exact day on which he would appear to lead them to Palestine.⁴³

Though at present unable to determine the connecting link, I have but little doubt that an old Messianic movement in France, briefly mentioned in the Hebrew translation of Maimonides' *Iggeret Tēmān*⁴⁴ and described in detail in the original Arabic,⁴⁵ belongs to the same category. In the eleventh century there arose in the city of Linon⁴⁶ in the interior of France a Messiah who found numerous followers in the community. They were attacked and plundered by the Gentiles and the Messiah himself was killed. Yet, as Maimonides who is our sole authority for this Messianic movement relates,⁴⁷ "some of them maintain to this day *annahu gāba*, that he (merely) became absent," evidently implying that the reality of his death was denied by his adherents.⁴⁸

The great Messianic and sectarian movement inaugurated by Sabbathai Zevi betrays in more than one respect the influence of heterodox Islam.⁴⁹ The very fusion of

⁴³ Grätz (VI, 246) has missed the point of the whole story by placing it in the life-time of Alroy. See also later p. 504 ff.

⁴⁴ *Kobez*, ed. Lichtenberg, II, fol. 7b, first column, l. 1-2.

⁴⁵ MS. of the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (comp. *Shiitic Elements*, 187, n. 7a). The MS. is not paginated.

⁴⁶ Written לִינוֹן. Perhaps Lyons or Lunel is intended. It is described as a large Jewish community.

⁴⁷ See above note 40.

⁴⁸ In the Arabic original of his *Iggeret Teman*.

⁴⁹ More about this Messiah see later p. 506 f.

⁵⁰ On the influence of Islam on Sabbathai Zevi see Abraham Danon in Sokolov's ספר השנה, I (1900), 164, 168 f. On the attitude of the Moham-medans toward Sabbathai, comp. Darmesteter, 63 ff.

radical heterodox teachings with Messianic or political aspirations, which is so typical of the Sabbathian movement, is characteristically Shiitic. Numerous particulars point in the same direction. In the present instance we are concerned with the Raj'a doctrine which, though not in name, is in substance unmistakably reflected in that great Messianic upheaval. Sabbathai Zevi, after having embraced Islam, died in a small town in Albania in 1676. Yet, many of his adherents denied that he was dead. "Know ye," writes a contemporary Sabbathian missionary,⁵¹ "that Sabbathai Zevi is not dead, albeit all believe of him that he is dead. This is not the case... On the contrary, he is now beginning to manifest himself."⁵² "What is most astonishing and utterly incomprehensible to me," declares another contemporary witness of the Sabbathian movement, the physician and scientist Tobias Cohen (d. 1729), "is the fact that there are great and distinguished scholars who still cling to their faith and continue to believe in him even after his death, maintaining that he was the true Messiah and that all that outwardly happened to him was through substitution and delusion, for he is still alive and merely concealed and hidden from the eyes of all living."⁵³

The remnants of the Sabbathians which still survive in the Jewish-Mohammedan Dönmeh sect in Salonica is

⁵¹ Mordecai of Eisenstadt (about 1679); he had lived in the East where he came in immediate contact with the Sabbathian elements; Grätz, X, 303.

⁵² ולכן דעו כי שבתי צבי לא מת אך כולם חושבים עליו שהוא מת ואינו
... (quoted by Grätz, X, 457 ult.). והשתא מתחיל לגלות עצמו

⁵³ אבל זאת היא תמיהא נשגבה (ed. Lemberg 1867), VI, 3: ונפלאה בעיני ולא אוכל לה שיש חכמים גדולים ורשומים אשר עודם מחזיקים בתומם ומאמינים בו גם לאחר מותו ואומרים שהוא היה המשיח האמתי ומה שנעשה בו לפי הנראה היה ע"י חלוף ואחיות עינים כי הוא עודנו חי אבל נסתר ונעלם מעיני כל חי. What is meant by substitution and delusion see later p. 510.

subdivided into three factions of which the two older ones are called, with a Turkish ending, the Izmirli (i. e. from Izmir = Smyrna, where Sabbathai was born) and the Yakubli (followers of Yakub, see presently).⁵⁴ The former who are the original Sabbathians and who still regard Sabbathai Zevi as their Messiah staunchly deny that Sabbathai is dead and they expect his "return" every day. In their religious assemblies they sing in their ancient Spanish dialect:

Sabetay Zevi, Sabetay Zevi,
 No ai a utro como a ti,
 Sabetay Zevi, Sabetay Zevi
 Esperamos a ti.⁵⁵

The Yakubli again owe their name to Jacob Querido, supposedly a son (in reality a brother-in-law) of Sabbathai,⁵⁶ whom they believe to be the true Messiah. Like the Shiitic sect of the Kittī'iyya, they "assert" that Sabbathai is dead and transfer the Raj'a doctrine to their Messiah Querido whose death they deny and whose return they eagerly expect.⁵⁷

The same belief is found in connection with the Sabbathian impostor Jacob Frank (d. 1791) who spent his early youth in Salonica and came in intimate contact with

⁵⁴ On the Dönme sect see Grätz, X, 306 and 459 ff.; *idem* in *MGWJ.*, 1884, p. 49 ff.; A. Danon of Adrianople in *ספר השנה*, I, (1900), 154 ff.; Gottheil in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, IV, 639, and Ben Jacob (of Salonica) in *אוצר ישראל*, IV, 31b ff.

⁵⁵ Grätz, *MGWJ.*, 1884, p. 56. The same sentiments are voiced in a Hebrew song quoted by Danon in *ספר השנה*, I, 176.

⁵⁶ Grätz, X, 304 ff.

⁵⁷ See later p. 498.

the Sabbathian remnants in that city.⁵⁸ Frank, after having repeatedly changed his religion, died in 1791. Yet his adherents believed that he was alive, applying to him the Midrashic dictum *יעקב אבינו לא מת*, "our father Jacob has not died."⁵⁹

We have already had occasion to observe that the Messianic expectations of the Shiites are far more intense and immediate than those of the Sunnites or orthodox Mohammedans.⁶⁰ This contrast is palpably demonstrated by the fact that in Shiism alone has the Messianic hope found expression in definite ceremonies. The Messiah of the present day Shiitic High Church, of the so-called Twelvers (*Ithnā'ashariyya*) or Imamites, is Mohammed b. al-Ḥasan, the twelfth Imam after 'Alī, styled, among many other epithets, *al-mahdī al-muntazar kā'im az-zamān*, "the rightly Guided, the Expected One, the One who rises in the (fulness of) Time."⁶¹ According to the Imamites, Mohammed, who is said to have been born in 873,⁶² entered as a child in his native town Ḥilla (near Bagdad) a subterranean passage (called in Persian *sardāb*)

⁵⁸ Grätz *Geschichte*, X, 378; *idem*, *Frank und die Frankisten*, Breslau 1868, p. 11 ff. On the commercial as well as spiritual relations between the Polish, more especially the Podolian, Jews and Turkey see *Frank und die Frankisten*, p. 16 ff. and Kahana, *פראנק ויערותו* Warsaw 1895 (based on the Polish treatise of Alexander Kraushar, *Frank i Frankisci*, Cracow 1895), p. 45 ff.; p. 53.

⁵⁹ Grätz, *Frank und die Frankisten*, 86.

⁶⁰ *Shiitic Elements*, 195 ff. See now Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 232 f.

⁶¹ The latter title can perhaps more correctly be rendered "the Chief of the Age," Goldziher, *l. c.*, p. 232. On the use of these titles by the Jews comp. above, note 40.

⁶² Corresponding to the year 260 of the Hijra. This is unanimously given as the year in which his father al-Ḥasan died (*Shiites*, II, 52, l. 28). The Shiites believe that he was born on the same day on which his father died (*ibid.*, l. 33). For other numerous suppositions regarding the date of his birth see *ib.*, p. 52-53.

and was seen no more. It is the dogmatic belief of official Shiism that Mohammed, who in consequence is also styled *ṣāhib as-sardāb* ("the Master of the Subterranean Passage"), is not dead but concealed in some mysterious spot⁶³ and his manifestation or "return" is awaited with the keenest expectation.⁶⁴ This expectation has crystallized itself in several curious ceremonies. Thus according to a Persian author who wrote two centuries after the disappearance of Mohammed b. al-Ḥasan, the Shiites of his time made regular pilgrimages to this *sardāb* calling on the Mahdī to return from his hiding place.⁶⁵ A writer who lived in the same age⁶⁶ reports as an eyewitness that the 'Alidic families of the Persian city Kāshān expected every morning the manifestation of Mohammed b. al-Ḥasan. The most prominent among them would sally forth on horseback,⁶⁷ bristling with arms,⁶⁸ so as to meet the awaited Mahdī, and would return disappointed, having missed their object.⁶⁹ The traveler Ibn Baṭūṭa (d. 1377) relates that in his time the Shiites of Ḥilla believed that Mohammed b. al-Ḥasan disappeared through the entrance of one of the mosques of that city⁷⁰ which was, probably, in consequence

⁶³ See above p. 486.

⁶⁴ The fanatical Spanish theologian, Ibn Ḥazm (died 1064), referring to this belief of the Shiites that their Mahdī disappeared in a subterranean passage, biting remarks that they are waiting for him, "not knowing in which privy he may have sunk" (*Shiites*, I, 77, n. 7). Elsewhere he intimates that this Mahdī was not born at all (*Shiitic Elements*, 197, n. 44).

⁶⁵ Comp. Blochet, *Le Messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie Musulmane*, Paris 1903, p. 155.

⁶⁶ Quoted by Yaḳūt, *s. v.* "Kāshān," IV, 15.

⁶⁷ See later p. 499 ff.

⁶⁸ On the underlying conception see later in the course of this article.

⁶⁹ The translation of this passage quoted by Darmsteter, 49, is not exact.

⁷⁰ Ibn Baṭūṭa, ed. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, II, 98 f. Ibn Baṭūṭa obviously misunderstood the information he received. The Mahdī disappeared through the Sardāb (see also the next quotation in the text). The mosque was subsequently built over it.

of that belief, veiled by a heavy silk curtain.⁷¹ Every night after the afternoon prayer⁷² a hundred men would proceed to the governor of the city from whom they would receive a horse,⁷³—sometimes it was a mule⁷⁴—saddled and caparisoned. With drawn swords and covered with arms,⁷⁵ they would in solemn procession, accompanied by the deafening noise of numerous instruments, carry the animal to the door of the above mentioned mosque and passionately call on the Mahdī to emerge from his retreat, “for corruption hath appeared and injustice is rampant.” Similarly the famous North African author and thinker Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) incidentally informs us⁷⁶ that the Shiites of Ḥilla continued at his time to practise a similar ceremony, proceeding with a riding animal⁷⁷ to the *sardāb* through which the Mahdī had once disappeared and loudly calling on him to appear. The ceremony began after the sunset prayer and lasted till the stars appeared thickly in the sky.⁷⁸

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁷² *Ib.*, p. 98. See about this seeming contradiction note 78.

⁷³ Which was evidently kept in readiness for that purpose, see later p. 499.

⁷⁴ See later note 88.

⁷⁵ See later in the course of this article.

⁷⁶ *Muḥaddima*, ed. Quatrememe, I, 359.

⁷⁷ *wa-ḥad ḥarrabū markaban*, *Markab* has here obviously the sense of *markūb* or the modern *markaba* “a riding animal.”

⁷⁸ According to Ibn Baṭūṭa. the ceremony took place “every night” after the afternoon prayer and continued till the sunset prayer. This seemingly contradictory statement and the disagreement with Ibn Khaldūn is explained by the fact that the *ṣalāt al-maḡrib* (the sunset prayer) which is recited by the orthodox Mohammedans at sunset or, more exactly, four minutes after sunset (Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London, p. 60), is not recited by the Shiites “before the stars have appeared thickly in the sky.” The ceremony, accordingly, started after the afternoon prayer towards the evening and lasted till late in the evening. This late recitation of the *maḡrib* prayer is quoted in the anthology of Ibn ‘Abdi Rabbihi (d.

A striking parallel to these Shiitic ceremonies, if not an imitation of them, is still to be observed among the modern Sabbathians of Salonica, the so-called Dönme sect. Jacob Querido, of whom mention was made before,⁷⁹ was converted to Islam with four hundred of his adherents in 1687.⁸⁰ As a faithful Mohammedan he considered it his duty to make a pilgrimage to Mecca and died on the way back in Alexandria.⁸¹ The Yakublis, however, deny that he is dead⁸² and anxiously await his return from the holy city of Islam. Not unlike the 'Alides of Kāshān, the elders of that sect still scrutinize the horizon every morning, expecting the manifestation of their Messiah,⁸³ and it is still one of their customs to send every Saturday a number of women⁸⁴ to the seashore where, with crossed arms, they wait for an hour or two, looking out for the blessed ship which should bring Jacob Querido back to his faithful.⁸⁵

940), *Al-'ikd al-farīd*, Cairo 1293 H, I, 269, as one of the parallels between Shiism and Judaism: "The Jews delay the *magrib* (= מעריב) prayer until the stars appear thickly (referring evidently to צאת הכוכבים), and so do the Rāfiḍa (= Shiites)."

⁷⁹ p. 494.

⁸⁰ Grätz, X, 305.

⁸¹ *Ib.*, 306.

⁸² See above p. 494.

⁸³ Gottheil in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, IV, 639b (article *Dönme*, last sentence).

⁸⁴ So Ben Jacob (of Salonica) in אוצר ישראל, IV, 33. Grätz, *MGWJ.*, 1884, p. 60 (in an account received indirectly from the Sabbathians): "one woman of the community with her children."

⁸⁵ Grätz, *l. c.*, states somewhat differently the manner in which Jacob Querido disappeared. The latter had spread the rumor of Sabbathai's death and set himself up as a prophet. Soon afterwards, Sabbathai who had not died but had been merely hidden (see above p. 494) returned to Salonica and denounced Jacob Querido who in consequence had to leave the town. "He actually departed one Saturday morning in order, as he said, to ascend to heaven and he left word that he should be awaited on the seashore."

In connection with the above facts which clearly demonstrate the influence of the Shiitic Raj'a doctrine, attention may be called to a few points of contact between heterodox Islam and heterodox Judaism. I mention them with a great deal of hesitation, for I fully realize the slippery nature of their similitude which, I expressly admit, may be accidental. Yet, the possibility of cause and effect is by no means precluded, and with the increase in our data which are at present so scanty this possibility may grow into probability or even certainty.

As in Judaism, so in Islam the returning Messiah is pictured either as a supernatural being who dispenses with human weapons and smiteth the wicked with the rod of his mouth or as a human conqueror who acts in the way of men.⁸⁶ It is not accidental that, in accordance with the latter conception which is predominant in Shiism,⁸⁷ the Shiitic Mahdī invariably appears *riding*, not like the meek and unassuming figure of the post-exilic Messiah on an ignoble ass, but, after the manner of warriors, on a noble horse.⁸⁸ Thus, in contrast to 'Alī, whose return is pictured in supernatural colors,⁸⁹ his son Mohammed Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya is heralded on his return by prancing steeds and flying banners.⁹⁰ Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya's champion, the Keisanitic poet Kuthayyir (died 723), who seems himself to have posed

⁸⁶ Comp. *AbS.*, II, 2 ff. and 18 f.

⁸⁷ This is largely due to the fact that in Shiism the Messiah is identified with historic personages.

⁸⁸ Occasionally also on a mule (above note 74). In biblical times also, prior to the introduction of the horse, the mule appears as a noble animal used on state occasions and even in war, comp. II Samuel 8, 4, 9; 18, 9; I Kings 1, 33; comp. also Isa. 66, 20.—It is interesting that Bahrām Hamāvand, the Messiah of the ancient Persians, is expected to manifest himself riding on a cow, *Shiitic Elements*, 198, n. 51.

⁸⁹ *AbS.*, II, 4 ff.

⁹⁰ *Ib.*, p. 18, note 5.

as a Messianic personage,⁹¹ announced before his death that after forty days⁹² he expected to return on a full-blooded horse.⁹³ Similarly, the Persian Shiitic Messiah Bihāfarīd who appeared in the eighth century⁹⁴ but in the tenth century was still believed to be alive⁹⁵ was thought to have ascended to heaven on a dark-brown horse and was expected to return in the same manner to take vengeance on his enemies.⁹⁶ The famous Shiitic pseudo-Messiah Muḩanna' (died 780)⁹⁷ made his followers believe "that his spirit would pass into the form of a grizzle-headed man riding on a grey horse and that he would return unto them after so many years and cause them to possess the earth."⁹⁸ Nowhere, however, does this particular feature loom so prominently as in the beliefs clustering around the Mahdī of official present day Shiism, Mohammed b. al-ḩasan. Some pertinent examples have been noted in the foregoing.⁹⁹ This particular conception is so intimately bound up with the belief in the return of this Mahdī that

⁹¹ He claimed to be the prophet Jonah (*Shiites*, II 26, 28) which in all probability means that he considered himself the forerunner of the Messiah Ibn al-ḩanafīyya. Jonah, according to an old Jewish conception, is identical with the Ephraimitic Messiah, the forerunner of the Davidic Messiah. Comp. סדר אליהו רבה, ed. Friedmann, p. 97 f. and the editor's remarks in the introduction p. 11 f. and p. 98, note 57. As early an authority as Jerome (Preface to Jonah) records the tradition of the identity of Jonah with the son of the woman of Sarepta.

⁹² See above, note 3.

⁹³ *Shiites*, 24, 10.

⁹⁴ On Bihāfarīd see Bīrūnī, 210 f.; Shahr., 187, Browne, 308 ff.; Houtsma in *WZKM.*, 1889, p. 30 ff.

⁹⁵ Browne, *l. c.*, p. 309, n. 4; Houtsma, *l. c.*, 30 and 37.

⁹⁶ Bīrūnī, 211, similarly Shahr., 187 penult.

⁹⁷ On Muḩanna see *Shiites*, II, 120 f., and the literature enumerated there, to which are to be added Bīrūnī, 211, and Browne, *l. c.*, 318 ff.

⁹⁸ Browne, *l. c.*, 323.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 496.

at the court of the Ṣafawid Shahs in Ispahan, who became masters of Persia in 1501 and declared Shiism the state religion of the land, two gorgeously mounted horses were always kept ready, the one for Mohammed b. al-Ḥasan, the other for his lieutenant Jesus.¹⁰⁰

There can be no doubt that the origin of this conception is to be sought in the ancient Judæo-Christian Messianic speculations and it is not impossible that a trace of their influence is to be found in Arabia prior to Mohammed.¹⁰¹ But if the instances to be quoted presently from later Jewish sectarianism be more than meaningless coincidences, the connecting link will have to be looked for in Shiism whose influence on Judaism is evident from many other particulars and in which the above Messianic feature has received such great prominence.

¹⁰⁰ Darmesteter, 50. Another example *ib.*, note 39.—The institution of a *faras an-nauba*, a sentry horse, "saddled, bridled and equipped, which was henceforth (beginning with the year 758) always in readiness at the Caliph's palace in case of emergency" (Browne, *Persia*, 317) offers an interesting parallel to the above, but is, of course, entirely different in origin.

¹⁰¹ When Dū-Nuwās, the Jewish ruler of Yemen, was routed in battle by the invading Abyssinians in 525, "he directed his horse towards the sea, then, spurring it on, rode through shallow water till he reached the depth and finally threw himself *with his horse* into it; *this is the last that was known of him*" (Tabari, I, 927 f.; similarly 930, 13). This description which no doubt represents, as was observed by Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, p. 191, n. 2, the attempt to glorify the end of the last national ruler of Yemen, may possibly reflect old Messianic expectations. The Southern Arabs believed in a Messiah of Ḥimyaritic-Sabæan stock "who will bring back the royal power to the Ḥimyarites in justice" (comp. *AbS.*, II, 16, n. 8; *ibid.*, p. 5, n. 6) and the last national king was certainly not unworthy of that honor. Already Beer (*ZDMG.*, IX (1855), p. 793) suggests that the Jews of Arabia looked upon Dū-Nuwās as a Messianic personage. His name Pinehas points in the same direction, comp. Goldziher, "Pinehas-Manṣūr," in *ZDMG.*, LVI, p. 411 f.—According to a slightly different variant of our legend, Dū-Nuwās precipitated himself with his horse into the sea from the height of a rock (Grätz, V, 90). Both variants are careful to mention the horse.

Turning to Jewish evidence we find that when Abū 'Īsa al-Iṣfahānī, who, as we have repeatedly seen, exhibits the features of a Shiitīc Mahdī, was attacked by the army of the Caliph, he left the magic line drawn by him as a protection around his followers and, *riding on a horse*, engaged single-handedly in a battle with the Mohammedans.¹⁰²

Such Messianic associations would also explain the fact that in the accounts of the Messianic adventurer David Reubeni emphasis is laid on the detail that he was riding on a white horse when paying a visit to the Pope¹⁰³ or that he was passing through the streets of Rome riding on a mule.¹⁰⁴

It is perhaps in consequence of similar notions that Sabbathai Zevi is described as riding on a lion when paying a visit to the Sultan.¹⁰⁵ The lion, as is well known, is associated in Jewish symbolism with the Messiah.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Shahr., 168.

¹⁰³ Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, II, 151, 11. 18-19.

¹⁰⁴ Grätz, IX, 231.

¹⁰⁵ Sasportas, קצור ציצת נובל צבי (Odessa 1867), p. 20b. 46b. Sabbathai himself is often represented as a lion, *ib.*, p. 21a ult., 26a, 29b, 47b.

¹⁰⁶ Its source is probably Gen. 49, 9. In IV Ezra 12, 31 ff. the Messiah is represented as "the Lion who will spring from the seed of David." Probably as a reflection of these ideas the Messiah is designated by the Falashas as "the son of the Lion" (see *AbS.*, II, 36). It may be mentioned in this connection that in a letter from Jerusalem dated 1528, the father of the two brothers who were supposed to reign over the Falashas is called Phineas (see above, note 101, and *AbS.*, II, 30, n. 4) and designated as the "Son of the Lion," "because of his great strength" (*JQR.*, I (1889), 197). Curiously enough a pseudo-Messiah by the name of אבן אריה is mentioned by Maimonides in the Arabic original of his *Iggeret Teman*.—It may be a mere coincidence, yet it deserves to be mentioned that in the conception of the Nuṣeiri sect who deify 'Alī, the latter appears riding on a lion (Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nuṣeiris*, Paris 1900, p. 70).

Finally attention may be called to a curious feature in these Messianic speculations which can be traced both in Judaism and in Islam and offers at all events a striking point of comparison, while the causal connection between them can in the present condition of our sources be nothing but a matter of conjecture. Whether in consequence of the Messiah's association with the heavenly regions or for some other reason, the accomplishment of *flying* is found in Islam in connection with Messianic manifestations. 'Alī, like his ancient prototype in the apocryphal writings,¹⁰⁷ is believed to be flying through the clouds,¹⁰⁸ and the same accomplishment is attributed to other Messianic and semi-Messianic personages.¹⁰⁹ A curious illustration of this peculiar conception is afforded by a remarkable incident in the history of Islam. The sect of the Rāwandīyya from Rāwend in Khorāsān which regarded the Caliph Manṣūr as a divine incarnation and believed him to be the Mahdī¹¹⁰ appeared in large numbers in the year 758 before his palace in Hāshimīyya and began to call on him to manifest himself. They believed that they were able to fly and, ascending the roof of the palace, precipitated themselves from it.¹¹¹ It is not improbable that similar scenes were to be witnessed simultaneously in other cities. At least the local

¹⁰⁷ See *AbS.*, II, 6.

¹⁰⁸ On 'Alī in the clouds see *Shiites*, II, 42 f.; *AbS.*, I, 325, n. 3. Comp. also Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 256.

¹⁰⁹ Thus the prophets Khadhir and Elijah are represented as flying to protect the wall erected by Alexander the Great against Gog and Magog. They are both brought in connection with the Mahdī. See the reference in my forthcoming book "*Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman*," (B. G. Teubner, Leipzig).

¹¹⁰ *Shiites*, I, 70, 13 and the literature quoted II, 121, 10 ff. Comp. also Browne, *Persia*, p. 316.

¹¹¹ Tabarī, III, 418. See van Vloten 48, who also quotes a Byzantine source.

historian of Aleppo¹¹² not only speaks of the appearance of the Rāwandīyya in the year 141 H. (=758) both in Aleppo and in Ḥarrān, but also informs us that "they maintained that they were in the position of angels."¹¹³ They ascended, as people narrate, a hill in Aleppo and, having dressed themselves in silken garments,¹¹⁴ flew from it, so that they broke their bones and perished."

The ultra-Shiitic sect of the Nuṣeiriyya which worships 'Alī as Creator harbors the same delusion in our own days.¹¹⁵

Similar notions are found in connection with Jewish sectarian movements.

The early pseudo-Messiah Serene who arose in the beginning of the eighth century among the Jews of Syria¹¹⁶ announced, according to the testimony of a contemporary witness,¹¹⁷ that he would lead the Jews *flying* to the Land of Promise.¹¹⁸

The two impostors, who made their appearance in Bagdad after the death of Alroy,¹¹⁹ forged letters in the name of the dead Messiah, who was believed to be temporarily hidden, promising to lead the Jews on a certain night

¹¹² *Selecta ex historia Halebi*, ed. Freytag, Paris 1819, Arabic text, p. 15.

¹¹³ This reminds one of the claim of the Shiitic sect of the Khattābiyya "that they would not die, but would be lifted up to heaven," *Shiites*, I, 69, 10. See also *ibid.*, II, 24, n. 1; 72, 30, and 118, n. 4.

¹¹⁴ See later note 122.

¹¹⁵ Van Vloten, *l. c.*, note 4.

¹¹⁶ Grätz, V, 169 ff.; 457 ff.; Comp. *Shiitic Elements*, 211.

¹¹⁷ Isidor Pacensis quoted by Grätz, *ib.*, 458.

¹¹⁸ "Messiamque se praedicans, illos ad terram repromissionis *volari* enuntiat." Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to assume that this conception was suggested or supported by a literal interpretation of Isa. 60, 8: "who are these (returning to Zion) that *fly* as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?"

¹¹⁹ See above p. 491 f.

flying to Jerusalem.¹²⁰ A contemporary witness gives an elaborate and striking description of that tragicomical scene.¹²¹ On the appointed night the Jews of Bagdad, having formerly deposited their money with the two swindlers, dressed themselves in green garments¹²² and gathered themselves together on the roofs, expecting to fly

¹²⁰ Samuel ibn 'Abbās in *Emek habacha*, translated by Wiener, Appendix, p. penult.: ואנכי יעין להם לילה ישירון פיהא אגמעון אלי בית אלמקדם.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. כג f.

¹²² כד, l. 4: ואכתסוא תיאבא לצרא. The Rāwandiyya in Aleppo dressed themselves on a similar occasion in silken garments (above note 114). The most natural assumption would be that both the Persian sectarians and the Jews of Bagdad put on festive attire to receive the Messiah in a befitting manner. As for the color, one ought to think of the fact that green as the color of the turban or dress is considered a sign of distinction (comp. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London, p. 28). There are however, several considerations which suggest a deeper meaning. Thus the pseudo-Messiah Muḩanna' (above note 97) was called by this name ("the veiled one"), because he used to veil himself in *green silk* (Browne, *Persia*, 318). The Persian heresiarch Behāfariḩ (above note 96) claimed that God had dressed him in a *green* shirt before he sent him down on earth to take up his prophetic mission (*ibid.*, 308). Another author (quoted by Houtsma in *WZKM.*, 1889, 30 ff.) narrates with even greater emphasis that Bihāfariḩ had in his possession a shirt and a mantle of *green silk* to which he referred as "Paradise garments" and in which he solemnly attired himself before he manifested himself as a God-sent prophet. In a contemporary description of the conversion of Sabbathai Zevi to Islam which took place in the presence of the Sultan, it is particularly mentioned that, as part of the ceremony, Sabbathai changed his black mantle for a *green* one (Grätz, X, 220). Sabbathai was probably regarded by the Mohammedans as the precursor of the Mahdī. The Mohammedan Chadhir legend which was well known to the Jews, who lived in Mohammedan countries, also suggests some parallels. In the Arabian Nights (ed. Bülāk, 1311 H, II, 14; 304th night) a mysterious being "clad in *green* raiment, with streaming dresses and radiant face" is pictured as *flying* through the heavens. This being is, as Burton (*Arabian Nights*, IV, 175, n. 2) suggested, none other than the ubiquitous Khadhir who is also represented as flying elsewhere (above, note 109). Khadhir, "the green prophet," is generally clad in green garments, Lane, 1001 *night* (1865), I, 20. Whatever be the true explanation of the above detail, it is certainly not accidental and is very probably rooted in some Messianic notion.

to the Holy Temple on the wings of angels.¹²³ The confusion and the noise, particularly among the women who had their infants with them, was indescribable. "They did not cease to make attempts at flying until the morning unraveled their shame and their credulity. The two impostors, however, escaped with what they had obtained of the property of the Jews to whom the manner of swindle and the excessive viciousness¹²⁴ exhibited by them¹²⁵ thus became evident." The year in which this incident took place became known as the "Year of Flying," *'ām aṭ-ṭayarān*, and the Jews of Bagdad reckoned a new year from that memorable event.¹²⁶

The following episode, though from a widely different environment, may be mentioned under the same category. The Messianic pretender who arose among the Jews of France and who is known to us from the account of Maimonides,¹²⁷ "claimed," to quote Maimonides verbally, "that he was the Messiah. His miracle of legitimation was in their opinion the fact that on one moonlit night he went out, climbed up the tops of some lofty trees in the field and then, throwing himself into the air, descended from tree to tree, as if he were flying. This, he maintained, was meant

¹²³ I believe that the original meaning of this statement is that the Jews expected to be endowed with wings of angels and to be able to fly *themselves* to Jerusalem. This would agree with the rest of the account, according to which the Jews themselves made attempts at flying, and would also form an exact analogy to the belief of the Rāwandiyya (above, note 113).

¹²⁴ p. כב, l. 12 read גלואן *gulwān* instead of גליאן.

¹²⁵ i. e. by the two impostors, read *ibid.*, תמאחרא instead of תמאחרוא.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. כב; comp. Grätz, VI, 246. Samuel ibn 'Abbās' account is quoted by Abulfeda, see de Sacy's *Chrestomathie Arabe*, I, 363 f.

¹²⁷ See above, p. 492.

by the verse in Daniel (7, 13) regarding the Messiah: 'and with the clouds like a son of man was he coming.'¹²⁸

According to a legend which is still believed in Adrianople,¹²⁹ Sabbathai Zevi, in order to establish his Messianic claim, "flew in the air like a winged being." The famous Haham Zevi, a staunch opponent of Sabbathai, who was anxious to invalidate these Messianic pretensions, soared in the air and managed to fly between two houses through the windows. Old people in Adrianople still point to the houses which were the scene of this curious aeronautic experiment.

2. DOCETISM

We have already had occasion to observe¹³⁰ that the doctrine of Raj'a necessarily presupposes that of Docetism. The instances quoted in the foregoing in substantiation of the former belief tacitly imply the latter doctrine. Yet the importance of Docetism and the variety of its aspects necessitates an independent discussion of its effects on Judaism.

Docetism is a dogma of ancient Gnostic origin.¹³¹ As was stated above,¹³² it was originally connected with Christ.

ואדעי אנה אלמשיח וכאנת איתח ענדהם אנה יכרג באלליל פי ליאלי אלקמר
וישלע פי רווס אלחמאר אלעאליה פי אלפחץ תם יהוי פי אלהוא וינול מן תמרה
אלי תמרה כאנה יטיר והרא קאל הו קולה פי אלמשיח פי דניאל ועם ענני שמיא
אלי תמרה. The imperfects suggest many such actions of the pseudo-
prophet. באלליל, however, is more naturally interpreted as referring to a
single feat.

¹²⁹ A. Danon (a native of Adrianople) in *ספר השנה*, I (1900), p. 178, also in *REJ.*, XXXVII, 104.

¹³⁰ See above p. 482.

¹³¹ See F. Ch. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*,² Tübingen, 1863, 227 ff., comp. *Shiites*, II, 29 f.; *AbS.*, II, 1 ff.

¹³² p. 482.

It teaches that Christ's martyrdom and death were merely fictitious and that the real victim was someone else—usually it was said to have been a devil—, who had been substituted for Jesus and had been made to assume his features.¹³³ This doctrine was widespread in early heterodox Christian circles and was able to maintain itself throughout the ages down to the Albigensian heresy.¹³⁴ It was adopted and formulated with great emphasis by Mānī. In the belief of the Manichæans, the whole human appearance of Jesus was an apparition, and so were his sufferings. "For it was not he who was crucified, but it was an emissary of the devil . . . who, as a punishment for his wickedness, was fastened to the cross by Jesus himself."¹³⁵

Manichæism, whose influence upon Mohammedan dogma can scarcely be doubted,¹³⁶ was probably the medium through which Docetism gained access into Islam. At all events the Docetic doctrine is formulated with great precision and emphasis in the Koran.¹³⁷

While, however, in orthodox Islam the Docetic belief, just as in Manichæism, appears always in connection with Jesus, in Shiism it was early transferred to the Shiitic Mahdīs and has in this transformation ever since occupied a preeminent position in the fabric of Shiitic Messianism. When 'Alī had been assassinated in the streets of Kufa, 'Abdallah b. Sabā proclaimed that the real victim was not 'Alī, but a devil who had assumed his features, and he

¹³³ *Shiites*, II, 29.

¹³⁴ Comp. *PRE.*,³ XIII, 765, 50 ff.

¹³⁵ *Shiites*, II, 29. See Flügel, *Mani*, 100, 254 ff., 336 f.

¹³⁶ Compare particularly the prophethood of Islam which is an exact analogy to that of Manichæism. See later in the course of this article.

¹³⁷ See above, note 8. Compare also Pautz, *Muhammeds Lehre von der Offenbarung*, Leipzig 1898, p. 200.

categorically refused to believe in 'Alī's death, though his brain were to be brought to him packed up in a bag.¹³⁸ The ultra-Shiitic Nuṣeiriyya sect which worships 'Alī as a divine incarnation declares, as a well-informed author of the eleventh century apprises us,¹³⁹ not only the earthly appearance of 'Alī but even that of his wife and sons to have been impersonations of Satan.¹⁴⁰ The applications of the doctrine of Docetism within the Shī'a are too numerous to be recorded here with any attempt at completeness.¹⁴¹ A few illustrations will suffice to demonstrate the wide currency and the wonderful tenacity of this belief. When Ismā'īl, the son of the famous Shiitic Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq (d. 765), died in the life-time of his father, the latter is claimed to have exhibited in public the body of his son in order that there might be no doubt as to the fact of his death,¹⁴² which precaution, however, did not prevent some enthusiasts from denying his death and from laying the foundation of the overwhelmingly powerful Ismā'iliyya sect. Again, the so-called Mūsāwiyya sect which repudiates the above-mentioned Ismā'īl and believes in the return of his younger brother Mūsā (d. 799),¹⁴³ puts the following

¹³⁸ The incident is recorded by several reliable authorities, see: *AbS.*, I. 308-309, 322, 324.

¹³⁹ *Shiites*, I. 72.

¹⁴⁰ The Nuṣeiriyya apply to 'Alī the words of the Koran (Sura 92, 3): "He begetteth not neither is he begotten," Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Noṣeiris*, 54. In a similar manner the Albigensians apply the Docetic belief not only to Jesus but also to his father and mother, *PRE.*,³ XIII, 765, 50 ff.

¹⁴¹ A number of examples have been collected *Shiites*, II, 30.

¹⁴² Shahr., 146; comp. Browne, *Persia* 296 and 293. According to a Persian author quoted by Blochet, *Le Messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie Musulmane*, 49, Ja'far, on the contrary, declared: "Ismā'īl is not at all my son; it is a demon who has come in his figure."

¹⁴³ On the return of Mūsā see *Shiites*, II, 40 particularly note 1.

Docetic utterance into his mouth: "Should anyone relate of me that he nursed me in my illness, washed me after my death, embalmed me, put me in shrouds, let me down into the grave, shook off the dust of my grave, you may call him a liar. If the people should inquire after me (when I have disappeared), then answer: 'He is alive, thanks be to Heaven.' Cursed be every one, who, when asked about me, replies: 'He is dead.'"¹⁴⁴ Perhaps even more characteristic than this positive evidence is the negation of this doctrine on the part of the Imāmiyya sect or the Twelvers. The latter, represented by the bulk of Shiism of to-day, believe in the continued existence and future return of the twelfth Imām Mohammed b. al-Ḥasan;¹⁴⁵ they are, in consequence, anxious to assert that the preceding eleven Imāms are in reality dead. An early dogmatist of the sect, the famous Persian theologian Ibn Bābüye (d. 991), gives expression to these sentiments by making the following onslaught on the above mentioned apparently prevalent Docetic conception:¹⁴⁶ "Our belief regarding this is that it actually happened to them (i. e. to the eleven Imāms) and that their condition was in no wise doubtful to the people. . . . On the contrary, their assassination¹⁴⁷ was witnessed in truth and reality, *not as a supposition or delusion*, nor as a matter of doubt and uncertainty. He who maintains that they (the Imāms), or even a single one among them,

¹⁴⁴ Quoted by Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 227.

¹⁴⁵ See above p. 495 f.

¹⁴⁶ In his catechism of the Imāmiyya, MS. British Museum. The Arabic text of the following passage is quoted *Shiites*, II, 30.

¹⁴⁷ It is the general belief of the Imamites, which is only true in part, that all the Imāms, except the twelfth and last who is to appear as the Mahdī, died an unnatural death. The descriptions of the martyrdom of the Imāms form a favorite theme in shiitic literature. Compare Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, p. 212 f.

pretended (to be dead), does not belong to us and we are not responsible for him." In order to illustrate the inexhaustible vitality of this doctrine, an instance may finally be quoted from the history of modern Babism.¹⁴⁸ When the Bābī apostle Mulla Ḥusein, after having for four months heroically resisted the besieging Persian troops, was mortally wounded in 1848, he called his faithful together and entreated them to persevere in their struggle. "He forbade them to believe in his death. The latter was nothing but a deceptive illusion, for in fourteen¹⁴⁹ days he would rise again. At the same time he ordered his most intimate friends to bury him with utmost secrecy so that no one should know where his body was interred."¹⁵⁰

Docetism is not entirely unknown to Judaism and is represented there by a few isolated instances.¹⁵¹ But in orthodox Judaism it has never attained to any historic or dogmatic significance. Hence the comparatively numerous specimens of Docetic belief to be met with in Jewish sectarianism cannot be derived from a Jewish source and, considering the environment in which these sectarian movements arose, they can be safely attributed to Mohammedan or, more correctly, heterodox Mohammedan influence.

¹⁴⁸ About Babism see later in the course of this article.

¹⁴⁹ This is undoubtedly a mistake for *forty*, see above, notes 3 and 92. Similarly the famous Ḥallāj (see later) was expected to return in forty days (*Shiites*, II, 114, 26). In Browne's statement regarding Ḥallāj (*Persia*, 435): "Just before his head was struck off, he bade his disciples be of good cheer, for he would return to earth again in *thirty* days" "thirty" is a mistake for "forty."

¹⁵⁰ F. C. Andreas, *Die Babis in Persien*, 19 f.

¹⁵¹ Comp. *AbS.*, II, 1, n. 4 and p. 44. Another example which affords a striking analogy to Shiitic conceptions is to be found in the later Midrash *Wayōsha* (about eleventh century). The hangman who was on the point of executing Moses by Pharaoh's command was changed into the form of Moses and killed by an angel in his stead. It might however be questioned whether this legend is genuinely Jewish.

Perhaps this influence may best be illustrated by a modern example. In 1868 there arose among the Jews of Yemen, who, in spite of their rigid orthodoxy, distinctly show the effect of the Mohammedan environment, a Jew by the name of Mari¹⁵² Shukr al-Kuḥeil who pretended to be the Messiah.¹⁵³ He found numerous adherents not only among the Jews but also among Mohammedans¹⁵⁴—the latter perhaps regarding him as the Antichrist—, and he created a tremendous sensation throughout the whole East.¹⁵⁵ Pursued by the Mohammedan powers, he withdrew, in true Mahdistic fashion, into the mountains¹⁵⁶ and declared to be invulnerable, boldly proclaiming: "If you do not believe my assertion that I am the Messiah, then cut off my head from my shoulders."¹⁵⁷ Finally the ruler of Ṣan'ā sent his soldiers who sought him out in the mountains and cut off his head, which they sent to the capital.¹⁵⁸ Yet his relatives were in no wise dismayed by this *dénouement*, for al-Kuḥeil had shrewdly enough forewarned them: "Do not believe that they have cut off my head, *for I only make it*

¹⁵² מרי = מורי, a favorite title of honor among Yemenite Jews.

¹⁵³ See on this pseudo-Messiah the account of Jacob Saphir, who was an eye-witness of this Messianic movement, in his **אבן ספיר**, II, 149 ff. A collection of epistles written by this Messiah and by others about him was published by Saphir under the title **אגרת תימן השנית** (Wilna 1873). See also the report of the traveler Solomon Reinman, **מסעות שלמה**, Vienna 1884, p. 11 f. An autograph letter of Shukr al-Kuḥeil was published in facsimile and discussed by Mr. David Sassoon in *JQR.*, XIX, 162 ff.

¹⁵⁴ **מסעות שלמה**, 13 f.; **אגרת תימן השנית** (in a letter from Aden), 25. That it was Kuḥeil's intention to appeal also to the Mohammedans is testified by Saphir, **אבן ספיר**, II, 151.

¹⁵⁵ See particularly Sassoon, *l. c.*

¹⁵⁶ **אגרת תימן השנית**, 7 and 49.

¹⁵⁷ **מסעות**, 14; see later note 161.

¹⁵⁸ **אבן ספיר**, II, 151.

so appear to them."¹⁵⁹ In a letter evidently forged and circulated in the name of the Messiah, the latter refers to his fictitious execution as a proof of the truth of his claim.¹⁶⁰ Saphir and Reinman, the two Jewish travelers from whom we derive our information, bear witness to the fact of his decapitation. But they also relate, without being in the slightest aware of the bearing of the fact, that his followers maintained "that his execution was merely an apparition."¹⁶¹

Stepping backward in the flight of ages, we are not a little surprised to find that an almost identical fate befell the Messiah who arose in the same country 700 years earlier and whose appearance formed the occasion and the subject of the *Iggeret Teman* of Maimonides. When the Messiah, whose end is described by Maimonides in his reply

אל (in a letter bearing the Messiah's name): 7, אגרת תימן השנית¹⁵⁹
תאמינו שחזכו ראשי אלא אני מראה להם כך.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14. מי שמע כזאת מי ראה כאלה היעמוד מכם אחד שיהרג (read (שנהרג?). In another epistle (*ib.*, 18) Kuheil claims that his head had been cut off and that Elijah to whom he constantly refers as his master and companion brought him to life again. He also boasts of the fact (*ibid.*) that on another occasion the Mohammedans had gathered around him with the intention of killing him, but they could do nothing against him, for his neck had become like a pillar of marble (*ibid.*). The same miracle is attributed in the Midrash to Moses (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, II, 282). Of the prophet Al-Khadhir who is generally identified with Elijah the Mohammedan legend reports a similar story (Ibn Hajar, *Iṣāba*, I, 920).

¹⁶¹ אבל המאמינים בו היו: 36, אגרת תימן השנית (in a letter from Ṣan'ā), p. 36:
אומרים שזה (sic) ההריגה אינה אלא לפנים ולא חלו בו ידים אבל היו מהפתאים
שאמרו: II, 151, אבן ספיר; שלא נהרג ולא חלו בו ידים ורק לפנים הרגוהו.
According to Saphir (in both passages), there were others who believed that Kuheil was actually dead but would be brought to life again.—Saphir also relates that Kuheil was believed to be invulnerable (אבן ספיר, II, 150; אגרת, II, 150; תימן השנית, p. 4). The same belief is held in Islam with regard to the Mahdī, Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 219. Compare for a similar claim of a famous Shiitic pseudo-Messiah, *Shiites*, II, 72, 30.

to the "wise men" of Marseille,¹⁶² was finally brought before the ruler of Yemen, he boldly declared: "My lord and king, cut off my head and afterwards I shall live as before."¹⁶³ His request was fulfilled and, as Maimonides slyly adds, "that poor fellow was killed."¹⁶⁴ Yet, as the same Maimonides informs us, "until this day, there are senseless persons who say that he now lives and will manifest himself."¹⁶⁵

When the Messianic enthusiast David Molcho had been burned at the stake, it was believed, with a rationalistic modification, that the Pope Clemens had substituted someone else for him. Many gave credit to his miraculous escape and continued to believe in him.¹⁶⁶

After the death of Sabbathai Zevi there were, to use the words of a well-informed contemporary,¹⁶⁷ "great and distinguished scholars who still cling to their faith and continue to believe in him even after his death, maintain-

¹⁶² Kobez, ed. Lichtenberg, II 26b.—MS. British Museum Add. 27129 fol. 139a and a MS. of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (formerly Halberstam, 456) read Montpellier instead of Marseille. Comp. on this reading Steinschneider, *Catal. Bodl.*, p. 1903.

¹⁶³ Kobez, 26b, second column: חתוך ראשי ואחר כן אני אחיה ואקום. ואחיה כבראשונה. MS. Add. 27129 reads simply and no doubt more correctly חתוך ראשו והוא יחיה; Add. 14763 (British Museum) תחתוך ראשי ואני אחיה מיד.

¹⁶⁴ ונהרג אותו העני. עני stands for Arabic *miskin*.

¹⁶⁵ מקברו.—ועד עתה יש שם חסרי דעה ואומרים עתה יחיה ויעמוד (מקברו) is rightly missing in both MSS., for the people altogether denied that he was dead. יעמוד (like Arabic *yaḥūmu*) is "to arise, manifest oneself as the *ḥā'im*," (see above, note 40). The Shiitic Mahdi who conquered Yemen and forced Islam upon the Jews (Grätz, VI, 278) is designated by Maimonides (*Iggeret Teman*, in Kobez, p. 1, l. 4) as בארץ תימן העומד (Arabic original: אלקאים). (בארץ אלימן).

¹⁶⁶ Grätz, IX, 247.

¹⁶⁷ Tobias Cohen Rofe (d. 1729); above p. 493.

ing that he was the true Messiah *and all that outwardly happened to him was through substitution and delusion.*"

It is but natural that the Docetic belief with its power of accommodating reality to theory finds its proper test and application in the case of death and particularly violent death which it is called upon to deny in order to enable the movement whose visible leader or moving spirit had departed to continue under the invisible one. But occasionally, and with a mere difference in detail, Docetism is applied to other phenomena the elimination of which appears desirable. A curious example of the application of this belief is found in connection with Sabbathai Zevi. When this embodiment of a pseudo-Messiah, who was generally believed to be the king of the Jews and an incarnation of the Divinity, had been incarcerated by the Turkish government, the Sabbathian missionaries explained this incongruity by the assertion that it was not Sabbathai in person who had been thrown into prison but the angel Gabriel who had assumed his features, while the Messiah himself ascended to heaven.¹⁶⁸ When again shortly afterwards Sabbathai renounced the religion of his fathers and became a Muslim, the same doctrine was employed to ward off the death-blow which this treacherous act would otherwise have dealt to the movement. It was boldly proclaimed that not Sabbathai Zevi but someone else had apostasized,¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Sasportas, קצור ציצת נובל צבי (Odessa 1867), 2b: וקצתם היו אומרים שחם ושלום ששבתאי המשיח הוא במאסר כי אם גבריאל בדמותו כי אמנם שבתאי לרקיע עלה; comp. also 28b.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 32b: וקצת מהאשכנזים שהיו יותר אדוקים היו ממאנים להאמין ולא לשמוע דבר רע כנגדו ומכל שכן שהמיר דת לכן אומרים שהוא עלה לשמים וצורתו כת רביעית שאם באולי המיר שאינו הוא בעצמו 41b: נדמה להם כאיש מומר אלא צל שלו אבל הוא בעצמו עלה לשמים ונעלם מן העין 445, l. 22. comp. also Grätz, X,

while Sabbathai himself went up to heaven and disappeared.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Already Grätz (X, 222) compares these notions with the ancient Docetic beliefs regarding Christ. But, not being aware of the Mohammedan medium, he is unable to establish the historic connection.

(To be concluded)